

merely the natural result of the hatred which had been incited in the hearts of evil men by the truths he taught; if, in a word, his death is valuable to us only to show how a good man may die, then the fact that the apostles placed it first and foremost among all the topics of their ministry is utterly unaccountable. Shall we say that the apostles gloried in the crucifixion of Jesus—a form of death which was notoriously pre-eminent in infamy—because of the evidence which his submission to such a fate furnished to them and to us of his matchless, infinite love? Did they preach Christ crucified—not *glorified* but *crucified*—did they plant their banner in “the reproach of Christ,” because in so doing they could show forth his faithfulness in dying a martyr for his message? That such considerations do give an added meaning to the tragedy of Calvary is clearly evident. We may properly point to the sufferings of Jesus as proof of his faithfulness and his love; but even this does not explain the prominence that was given to the fact of his death or the use that was made of the fact, in Apostolic preaching. There is indeed but one adequate explanation by which to account for the exalted place which the doctrine of the cross held in the preaching and in the writings of the apostles; and that is, they meant to teach that the sufferings of Christ were expiatory and vicarious.

It should be evident to every thoughtful reader that the entire structure of the New Testament—I speak not now of particular passages but of the general tenor and spirit of the whole—is based on the fact that the Holy Spirit taught, and the apostles believed and solemnly announced, that the death of Jesus was an expedient conceived in infinite wisdom for saving guilty sinners without dishonor to the divine government. Aside from the passages which formerly set forth the doctrine, the genius and arrangement of the Scriptures, and the relative emphasis accorded to its different parts conclusively show that the crucifixion of Christ was a propitiation—an atonement for the sins of the world.

The prophecies of the Old Testament unmistakably teach the atonement of Christ. The seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head and effect our deliverance from sin, is represented as accomplishing that deliverance by his own substitutionary and vicarious suffering. He was to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, to be wounded for our transgressions and be bruised for our iniquities. He was to make his soul an offering for sin and to be numbered among transgressors. He was to bear our sins in his own body on

the tree, and by his stripes we are to be healed.

The types and ceremonial institutions of the Mosaic system also teach the same truth—that the sufferings of Christ furnish full expiation for the sins of men. The Jewish sacrifices are represented as types of the “Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,” and the efficacy which in them was but nominal and ceremonial, is described as real and actual in the atonement of Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews, read as a commentary upon the Levitical law reveals to what extent the types and shadows pre-figured, not only the mediation of Christ, but also his work of redemption and atonement. But it is when we take up the New Testament scripture verse by verse that we find the glorious doctrine of substitutional sacrifice most clearly set forth. It is repeated and amplified and emphasized over and over again in many clear and positive and unmistakable texts. The general statement of the doctrine is that Jesus Christ suffered death to satisfy justice and to shield guilty men from the consequences of sin.

The Atonement viewed in the combined light of the many scriptural passages which speak of its nature, its extent and its application, is declared to be the *great expedient* suggested by divine benevolence, and substituted in the moral government, instead of the punishment due to offending mankind, whereby all men, even the guiltiest, may, thru faith, become partakers of the grace and favor and salvation of God to which, in their own merit, they had no claim.

The statement of the Scriptures is, that “All had sinned and come short of the glory of God,” but “Being justified freely by grace thru the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be the propitiation thru faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, thru the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

The Scriptures teach that Jesus took our place; that he suffered in the room and instead of guilty men; that he voluntarily engaged, for the ends of divine government, to undergo degradation and suffering and death that the penalties threatened by the law might not be suffered by the violators of the law. He suffered, not that the wrath of God might be appeased, but that sovereign mercy might be extended, consistent

with the claims of sovereign justice. He suffered, not to reconcile God to us, but to reconcile us to God. He suffered, not because God would not be propitiated otherwise than by the death of his Son, but that men might know how jealously God guards the honor of his law, and that he might fix an eternal stigma on sin.

To say that the death of Jesus was an expedient to *induce* and *bribe* God to show mercy to sinners; that it was to overcome his unwillingness to save, or that he took pleasure in the pangs and tortures of the Mediator, is not only a perversion of the Scriptures, but it is abhorrent to every sense of moral justice and right. There was a necessity for his death, even tho he died a voluntary sacrifice, but the necessity did not grow out of the character of the Moral Governor. The necessity, if I may call what was a perfectly free and voluntary act a necessity, is to be found in the state of the offenders and their relation to the divine government. If men were to be saved the breach made by sin must be mended. If chaos and anarchy were to be averted and the majesty of the law be maintained, satisfaction must be rendered, not to God, but to the law co-existent with God, the fixed unalterable rule of right which sin had outraged and dishonored.

The historical story of Zalencus, king of the Locrians, illustrates how it behooved Christ to suffer tho God was not willing to forgive.

The king had established a law against adultery, the penalty for which was, that the offender should lose both his eyes. The first person found guilty was the king's own son. The case was a difficult one. The king loved his son and wished to spare him, but if he forgave him he would dishonor his own law and it would no longer be respected by his subjects. He devised an expedient which magnified the law and at the same time saved his son from blindness. The expedient was this: The king would lose one eye and the offender should lose one. The honor of the law was thus preserved and mercy was extended to the guilty. He showed at the same time his abhorrence for the sin and his love for his son.

The death of Jesus Christ was just such an expedient as this. God did not destroy the law, but he accepted the sacrifice of his Son as a satisfaction to public justice for the sins of men. When we speak of justice having been satisfied in the death of Christ, the meaning of course is that it was *public* justice that was honored in the Atonement. The nature of God makes it impossible that *retributive* justice should have been considered in a transaction which involved the death of the dear